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A difesa di Casale. L'organizzazione difensiva di epoca tardomedievale nelle estreme propaggini del territorio del Basso Monferrato

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Abstract

Much has been studied on the fortifications of the town of Casale Monferrato, but there is little information about the defensive structures placed in the surrounding country. Their almost complete oblivion was caused firstly by the military operations occurred in the territory and after by the mining activities in the lime marl quarries. The presence of the fortified building of Rosignano, as that of Terruggia and of San Giorgio is well depicted in the pen drawing dated 1530, "Casale besieged by the Spaniards in 1628", attributed to Carlo Morello. The great battle that overturned the entire territory in 1640 and which has remained a living testimony in the memory of Rosignano Monferrato is a clear sign of the importance of this small town perched on a tufaceous hill that overlooks Casale and the plain from above. The origins of the village of Rosignano, which in the Middle Ages held a military garrison on the fortress and a thirteenth-century parish church, can be traced back to the sec. XIII. Its building disposition, in blocks arranged in a semicircle, constitutes a defensive circle on the southern front of the castle, which rises overhanging the fortress, looking towards the northeast. The fortified structure, according to the sources, should also include the remains of a parish church that could be identified with the present oratory of S. Antonio. This religious building of ancient and so far not sufficiently studied medieval origin, with remains of cycles of frescoes, appears with ribbed ogival vaults and remains of a bell tower on the façade according to a model not widely used in the Piedmont area that is found only in the not far Canavese. Comparing the municipal documents, and first of all the Statutes of 1304, with the architectural persistences, still remembered in the "bulwarks" of the village, the research intends to outline some hypotheses on the design of a territory whose anthropization was certainly imposed by military strategy needs.

Keywords: fortificazioni, rocca, baluardi, disegno del territorio

1. Introduzione: un paese arroccato su un colle

Molto si è studiato sulle fortificazioni della città di Casale Monferrato, ma poche sono le informazioni tuttora emerse intorno alle strutture difensive situate nei territori circostanti ed in particolare relativamente ai territori di Rosignano Monferrato e Terruggia che per secoli, in particolare in epoca medievale, hanno protetto la città da sud-ovest, delle quali le vicende militari, e più tardi quelle estrattive delle marne, sono state la causa del loro totale oblio.

La presenza di una struttura fortificata a Rosignano, parimenti a Terruggia e a San Giorgio è ben evidente nel disegno del 1630, "Casale assediato da spagnoli nell'anno 1628", attribuito a Carlo Morello (BRT, Manoscritti militari, n. 178, cc. 148-149 v.). La grande battaglia che nel 1640 sconvolse l'intero territorio e di cui è rimasta viva testimonianza nella memoria di Rosignano Monferrato è il chiaro ultimo segno dell'importanza che questo